



Inspection Report

Timothy Stark
3320 Jack Teeple Rd
Charlestown, IN 47111

Customer ID: **11620**
Certificate: **32-C-0204**
Site: 001
TIM STARK

Type: ROUTINE INSPECTION
Date: Sep-13-2015

2.131 (b) (2) (i)

HANDLING OF ANIMALS.

On Sunday Sept 13, 2015 two APHIS officials attended the 2 pm Tiger Playtime at this facility. There were approximately 40 to 50 members of the public in attendance, which included one new born baby, one toddler and approximately 10 other children under 10 years of age. The attendants gave a few instructions on keeping fingers or other body parts out of the cub's mouth and instructed the public to stay seated but crawl or move around as much as possible. The gate to the cub area was opened and two cubs walked out. One cub appeared to be asleep and was dragged out by its front feet, the fourth cub was pushed out from behind. According to the attendants these cubs were 16 weeks old and weighed 35 to 40 lbs. There were seven attendants present, mostly young people. The owner was not present until the photo opportunity after the Playtime. Each cub, except for the non-responsive cub, had an attendant who tried to stay with their cub at all times. The cubs had no collars or leashes on them. These attendants had a riding crop they used to swat the cubs' nose if the cub started to bite. The attendants could not always keep up with the cubs as the cubs would leap through the crowd. At these points the cubs were outside of their direct control. The cubs were swatted frequently with the riding crops when the attendants were near them. Some of the swats were excessive in severity causing the cubs obvious discomfort.

Physical abuse shall not be used to train, work, or handle animals. The use of a riding crop to prevent these large, aggressive cubs from biting is considered physical abuse and can cause unnecessary discomfort, pain and suffering to the animal.

Correct immediately by ceasing the use of physical abuse to handle animals.

2.131 (c) (1) REPEAT

HANDLING OF ANIMALS.

There were at least two incidents where members of the public were bitten. A little girl (approximately 8 or 9 years old) yelled "ow" after one of the cubs crawled into her lap and grabbed her right lower bicep in its mouth. The little girl held her arm for a minute then checked to see if the skin had been broken.

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The second incident occurred when one of the cubs bit a lady on the right forearm apparently breaking the skin. After this incident, an attendant alerted another that there had been a "battle wound". They had the lady follow them out of the room for a short time presumably to clean the wound.

During public exhibition there must be minimal risk of harm to the public and the animals. These animals are too big, too fast, and too dangerous to rely on a riding whip to control their actions. As noted previously these animals frequently escaped from their attendant and roamed free for the most part. In several instances the cubs tried to eat cameras with their attendants standing by. These cubs could easily have pounced on a younger child in the audience and caused serious injury or even death to the babies. When tiger cubs reach this size, speed, and strength, contact with the public is no longer safe.

Half way through the playtime a young capuchin monkey was brought out and passed around to the public for photo opportunities. Young children as well as adults were allowed to hold the monkey either on their head or shoulder. On at least one occasion the handler dropped the leash while the animal was on a man's shoulder. Near the end of the playtime session the monkey seemed to become agitated and wanted to remain with the handler. The handler continued to place it on members of the public for photos. Allowing a monkey, especially an agitated monkey, this close to someone's head and face is irresponsible/inexperienced handling. This animal could cause serious injury with a bite to someone's face or head, especially a small child.

REMAINS UNCORRECTED.

2.131 (c) (2) DIRECT NCI HANDLING OF ANIMALS.

These cubs have been exhibited almost daily, with multiple sessions, since the end of June. Saturday, September 12, for example, the cubs had 11 sessions with a one hour break. Sunday, September 13, the day of the inspection, the animals had been exhibited for 5 hours. The "Playtime" session was 30 minutes long, but then some cubs were used for individual photo shoot opportunities. After the session APHIS officials attended, the animals were to be given a one hour break and then exhibited for an additional 5 hours. Performing animals must be allowed a rest period between performances at least equal to the time for one performance.

The fact that these cubs are allowing the attendants to drag them around by their front legs, non-responsively, suggests they are exhausted and have no choice but to cope with the situation.

Correct immediately by allowing these cubs a rest period after each "playtime/photo session" at least equal to the time of the session.

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2.131 (c) (3)

DIRECT NCI

HANDLING OF ANIMALS.

There was one attendant that appeared to be there expressly to keep the cubs active. He persistently teased the cubs to make them "attack" for good photo opportunities.

As the 30 minute session progressed the one cub that had been pulled into the room by its front feet was pulled to other areas of the room so that additional people could pet and take photos. This cub never stood up during this session and remained unresponsive, as it was dragged from one part of the room to another. As the session progressed two additional cubs laid down to nap and were also dragged around the room for petting and photo sessions. At the end of the session, three of the four cubs had to be dragged by their legs from the exhibit area. The one remaining "awake" cub was used for individual photo opportunities.

Young growing animals normally take frequent naps during the day. Not allowing these animals to follow normal behavior as they grow may interfere with their development. It can also cause stress and possible illness.

Correct immediately by providing these cubs with adequate rest, without public handling.

Inspection conducted on Sept 13, 2015 by Dr. Cindy DiGesualdo VMO and Charles Willey IES investigator.

Exit interview conducted on Sept 14, 2015 with licensee, Dr. Rick Kirsten SACS, Dr.Cindy DiGesualdo VMO, and two security guards.

By the licensee signing this document it is not an admission of guilt but serves to reflect the licensee's receipt of the report and exit interview.

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